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## **1 – ITC cleanup targets pockets of oil on bayous, Ship Channel, Houston Chronicle, 3/26/19**

<https://www.chron.com/neighborhood/deerpark/article/ITC-continues-cleanup-effort-at-charred-Deer-Park-13717093.php>

Cleanup crews at the charred Intercontinental Terminals Co. Deer Park plant will resume scooping up pockets of oil in the Houston Ship Channel, Tucker Bayou and Buffalo Bayou before reopening the commercial waterway to traffic, U.S. Coast Guard officials said Tuesday.

## **2 - Oil, sludge not contained near Deer Park chemical fire, Coast Guard says, KPRC, 3/26/19**

<https://www.click2houston.com/news/cleanup-crews-continue-to-work-after-deer-park-chemical-fire>

A park now acts as the primary staging area for contractors working to contain or clean up the contaminants that spilled out of the ITC facility during a chemical fire that started on March 17.

## **3 - Do not eat fish caught in Houston Ship Channel: Officials, ABC 13, 3/26/19**

<https://abc13.com/do-not-eat-fish-caught-in-houston-ship-channel-officials/5219448/>

Texas Department of State Health Services is warning people not to eat fish caught in the Houston Ship Channel. The area has been closed since Friday, and the U.S. Coast Guard has been skimming the water to pull out oily product.

## **4 - Harris County receives permission to take legal action against ITC over tank fire, ABC 13, 3/26/19**

<https://abc13.com/harris-county-to-take-legal-action-against-itc-over-tank-fire/5218159/>

The Texas attorney general has already filed a lawsuit against Intercontinental Terminals Company (ITC) over the tank fire at its Deer Park facility. Now it appears Harris County will do the same thing.

## **5 - Houston channel importance swelled as oil, gas exports rose, Bloomberg, 3/27/19**

<https://www.mysanantonio.com/business/energy/article/Houston-Channel-s-Importance-Has-Swelled-as-Crude-13719862.php>

On a normal day, 42 tankers, 19 freighters, 391 barges, 128 ferries and 2 cruise ships will move through the Houston Ship Channel. On any given day, one of those tankers may be as long as 1,500 feet. The last week, though, has been anything but normal.

## **6 – EPA may thwart efforts by states to set stricter pesticide rules, Politico, 3/26/19**

<https://www.politico.com/story/2019/03/26/epa-pesticide-rules-1292061>

State regulators are worried that the Environmental Protection Agency is getting ready to override them on a host of pesticide regulations by negating stricter rules intended to curb crop damage or prevent environmental hazards from pesticides.

## **7 – EDITORIAL: Protect the Buffalo, Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 3/27/19**

<https://www.nwaonline.com/news/2019/mar/27/nwa-editorial-protect-the-buffalo-20190/>

Just as every Arkansan is touched in some way by the state's strong connection to agriculture, the state's residents are also impacted by the quality of water in the form of lakes, creeks, streams and rivers. This is why the debate over Senate Bill 550 in the Arkansas General Assembly is so important.

**8 - OPINION: Constant vigilance, Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 3/25/19**

<https://www.nwaonline.com/news/2019/mar/27/brenda-blagg-constant-vigilance-2019032/>

State lawmakers are getting an earful these days on legislation that would change how hog farms are permitted in this state. They should be.

**9 – OPINION: The Carlsbad Department of Development is thankful for WIPP, Carlsbad (NM) Current-Argus, 3/26/19**

<https://www.currentargus.com/story/news/local/2019/03/26/carlsbad-department-development-thankful-wipp/3066281002/>

From the mid 1970s until the first waste shipment was received on March 26, 1999, the Carlsbad Department of Development and its members realized what benefits the WIPP site might have on the economy of Carlsbad and worked tirelessly to help get the project approved, constructed and built.

**10 – Wheeler vows not to work on Pebble, some Superfund sites, E&E News, 3/26/19**

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2019/03/26/stories/1060129543>

EPA chief Andrew Wheeler has promised not to weigh in on the Pebble mine proposal and toxic waste site cleanups connected to his former lobbying clients after media scrutiny.

**11 – Researcher warns climate change could spur financial crisis, Bloomberg, 3/26/19**

<https://www.abqjournal.com/1296622/researcher-warns-climate-change-could-spur-financial-crisis.html>

Climate change is becoming increasingly relevant to central bankers because losses from natural disasters that are magnified by higher temperatures and elevated sea levels could spark a financial crisis, a Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco researcher found.

**12 – West Bank cyanide plant proposal again goes before skeptical public, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 3/26/19**

<https://www.nola.com/environment/2019/03/west-bank-cyanide-plant-proposal-again-goes-before-skeptical-public.html>

As Cornerstone Chemical Co. tries to sway public opinion for a new cyanide plant, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality said Tuesday (March 26) it has received 932 comments on whether to issue an air quality permit for the Waggaman project. “That is a substantial number,” agency spokesman Greg Langley said.

**13 – With Mississippi River beginning to recede, Bonnet Carre Spillway closure begins, Baton Rouge Advocate, 3/26/19**

[https://www.theadvocate.com/new\\_orleans/news/article\\_e339892c-4fd4-11e9-9df7-67e9b9e27490.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/article_e339892c-4fd4-11e9-9df7-67e9b9e27490.html)

With a reduction in the Mississippi River, the Bonnet Carre Spillway will begin to close on Tuesday, the Army Corps of Engineers announced. The closure of bays begins 26 days after the opening, and the river still remains at elevated levels.

**14 – DOD chief addresses PFAS criticism, skirts climate question, E&E News, 3/27/19**

<https://www.eenews.net/eedaily/2019/03/27/stories/1060130107>

Lawmakers on the House Armed Services Committee yesterday grilled acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan on the impacts of climate change on the military. They also pressed him on contamination caused by toxic nonstick chemicals found in military firefighting foam.

# ITC cleanup targets pockets of oil on bayous, Ship Channel

By Samantha Ketterer Updated 12:00 pm CDT, Tuesday, March 26, 2019



IMAGE 1 OF 117

FILE - In a Wednesday, March 20, 2019 file photo, emergency crews continue to douse what's left of the now-extinguished petrochemical tank fire at Intercontinental Terminals Company, in Deer Park. Fire crews extinguished the blaze at ITC about 3 a.m., Wednesday, almost four days after it started, which caused a plume of black smoke to linger over the Houston area. ITC officials said the cause of the fire is still unknown. EPA on-site coordinator Adam Adams said they have been in Deer Park since Sunday, conducting air monitoring at ground level and in the plume. Biggest concerns are "volatile organic chemicals" and particulates, Adams said. He added that no hazardous levels have been detected. (Brett Coomer/Houston Chronicle via AP, File)

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Cleanup crews at the charred Intercontinental Terminals Co. Deer Park plant will resume scooping up pockets of oil in the Houston Ship Channel, Tucker Bayou and Buffalo Bayou before reopening the commercial waterway to traffic, U.S. Coast Guard officials said Tuesday.

About 60,000 feet of boom has been deployed to contain the oil, which spilled into a nearby drainage ditch and the channel after a containment wall breached at the site of the fire at the chemical storage facility. It's unclear how much of the firefighting foam and other contaminants infiltrated the channel.

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Only on HoustonChronicle.com: **Houston Ship Channel closure could cost energy industry \$1 billion**

der Caren Damon of the Coast Guard. Cargo

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area to a non-affected area.

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A portion of the chemical storage facility exploded and caught fire on March 17, releasing an ominous plume of smoke that drifted over Harris County for days. The blaze was extinguished early Wednesday morning, but at least two flare-ups have erupted since then.

#### **Premium analysis: Deer Park fire underscores why good companies plan for disasters**

The Coast Guard has sent several test vessels through the ship channel to determine whether any oily product appears on the hull of ships in a clean area, which is a method to see whether the oil is transferring from location to location through vessel movements.

Six ships and 66 towing vessels made it through the affected area on Monday, Damon said.

Air and water quality monitoring is also continuing, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has 17 water testing sites, from Battleground Park south to Crystal Beach, representative Jeff Kunze said. The organization will soon begin reviewing ITC's waste management plan.

Weather patterns are expected to change Tuesday night, and winds are expected to move from the northeast, EPA on-site coordinator Adam Adams said. The EPA is prepared to conduct air monitoring in affected locations, before and after wind shifts, he said.

Wind did get in the way of some removal of chemicals at the ITC tank farm on Monday, incident commander Brent Weber said.

# Oil, sludge not contained near Deer Park chemical fire, Coast Guard says

By [Phil Archer](#)- Reporter

Posted: 4:43 PM, March 26, 2019

Updated: 6:34 PM, March 26, 2019

**DEER PARK, Texas** - A park now acts as the primary staging area for contractors working to contain or clean up the contaminates that spilled out of the ITC facility during a chemical fire that started on March 17.

The number has grown to more than 1,000 federal, state and local workers and the U.S. Coast Guard said all of the oil and sludge is not contained in the water near the site of the fire.

Pockets of oil and other hydrocarbons still contaminate the Ship Channel from River Terrace Park eastward to Buffalo Bayou, as well as Old River, San Jacinto port, and Lynchburg.

"The primary one is Tucker Bayou that we are focusing on, then we have some smaller pockets that are in Buffalo Bayou and the Ship Channel," Adam Adams, with the EPA, said.

So far, cleanup crews have deployed about 80,000 feet of floating booms and are laying more.

It appears that oil and contaminates have been able to breach the booms in several areas. The U.S. Coast Guard said the issue is being addressed.

"We have triple-tiered, essentially put tiers of booms in place. We also have skimmers on the water. Both on the opposite side of the boom, what we called the upward side of the boom, as well as in the contained areas," U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Caren Damon said.

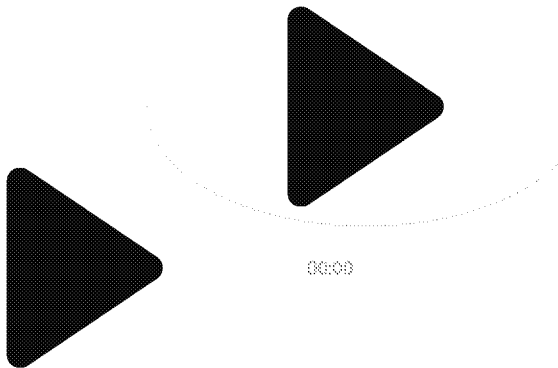
The Coast Guard said more than half a million gallons of oily water have been skimmed up from waterways.

Neither the Coast Guard nor ITC has said how much may have flowed from the ruptured tanks into the channel.

# Do not eat fish caught in Houston Ship Channel: Officials

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State officials are warning people not to eat fish from the Houston Ship Channel.

Tuesday, March 26th, 2019 10:18PM

**DEER PARK, Texas (KTRK) --** Texas Department of State Health Services is warning people not to eat fish caught in the Houston Ship Channel.

The entire area has been closed since Friday, and the U.S. Coast Guard has been skimming the water to pull out oily product.

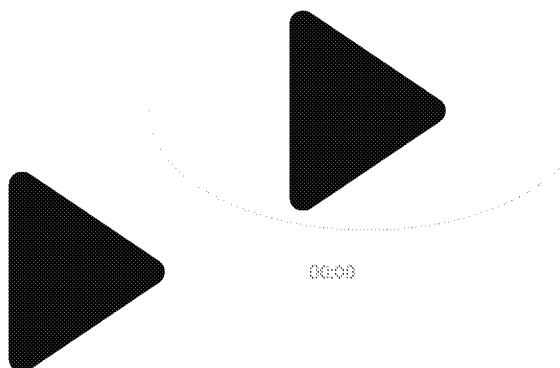
Health officials normally warn children and women of childbearing age to not eat fish or crab from this area, but the new warning applies to everyone.

The advisory urges that those who do choose to consume fish caught in the upper Houston Ship Channel eat no more than one meal including the fish per month.

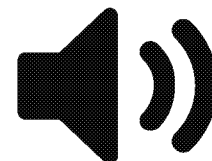
# Harris County receives permission to take legal action against ITC over tank fire

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County could take ITC to court

Tuesday, March 26th, 2019 4:21PM

**DEER PARK, Texas (KTRK) --** The Texas attorney general has already filed a lawsuit against Intercontinental Terminals Company (ITC) over the tank fire at its Deer Park facility.

Now it appears Harris County will do the same thing.

On Tuesday, the county attorney received permission to file litigation at "the appropriate time" over the fire and its aftermath.

The primary purpose is to make sure the incident doesn't happen again. The county attorney requested that a third party auditor come in and review what went wrong at the facility.

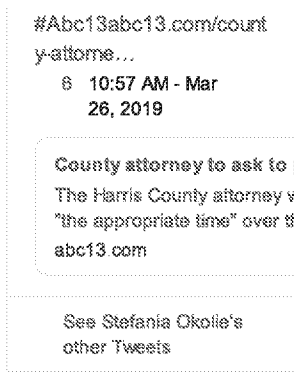
It also requested to know in detail the costs incurred by the county.



**Stefania Okolie**  
@StefaniaOnABC

Replying to  
@StefaniaOnABC13

**MOTION APPROVED:**  
Harris County will pursue legal action again ITC for tank fires in Deer Park. Seeking recovery costs and outside auditor to come in.



This comes as the Houston Ship Channel remains closed. There's still no timeline on when it will re-open.

The Coast Guard says the Ship Channel won't re-open until there is no more product in the water. Right now, pockets of product remain in the San Jacinto port, Carpenters Bayou, Tucker Bayou, and Old River.

Chemicals from the tanks leaked into the water after a containment wall around the tank farm was breached. Cleanup operations have been underway ever since.

The Environmental Protection Agency said that it recovered over 20,000 barrels of oily water on Monday. By Tuesday morning, that number was up to 33,000 barrels.

"Every day it's more effective and that's a positive thing," said Adam Adams, EPA on-scene coordinator.

**RELATED: Several town halls planned after fire reignited at Deer Park ITC facility**

ITC says its objective continues to be to empty the benzene-containing tanks damaged by the fire.

A chance of re-ignition still exists until that happens.

ITC said during an update Tuesday morning that it couldn't transfer the product from one of the tanks, 80-13, due to the changing wind shift. The goal Tuesday will be to start removing chemical from that tank.

According to the company, it has also made progress in remediating the ditches along Tidal Road, Independence Parkway and the property around the facility.

Even though the cloud of smoke is gone, people in the area are still frustrated and concerned about their health.

"So you have to wonder is there something out there that's not being told because they don't want the public to know," said Cindy Keener, who attended a town hall about the incident.

"We keep seeing the same spokesperson, the same tears and what are we getting from that?" said Kenia Escobar, who lives near the ITC facility.

If you have concerns about your health and you don't have a care provider, Harris Health System's Ask My Nurse hotline will remain open through 8:30 p.m. Tuesday. The number is



713-634-1110.

**SEE ALSO: Fireball erupts as Deer Park tank fire burns for 3rd night**

ITC says that so far it has received 2,000 calls to its claims hotline. Three hundred claims have been submitted.

**How to file a claim against ITC for illness or damage from smoke**

"Between ITC's insurance and the available financial resources, ITC will prevail through this," said Brent Weber, ITC incident commander.

"I can assure you that our executives are very, very involved, working very hard with this incident. They will guide us in the right direction and make sure that we have the resources to ensure that we get back to where we were," said ITC spokeswoman Alice Richardson.

As a precaution, Harris County Commissioner Precinct 2 has closed the following parks with waterfronts as cleanup continues:

Bay Area Park in Houston

Clear Lake Park in Seabrook

Sylvan Beach in La Porte

Juan Seguin in La Porte

Rio Villa Nature Trail

Meadow Brook

River Terrace

Moncrief Park

The Lynchburg Ferry remains closed to the public.

**BAYTOWN:** The Baytown Nature Center will also remain closed until further notice.

**LA PORTE:** Seabreeze Park and Klein Retreat in La Porte will remain closed until further notice.

# Houston channel importance swelled as oil, gas exports rose

Ben Foldy, Bloomberg 7:30 am CDT, Wednesday, March 27, 2019



IMAGE 1 OF 122

In a Wednesday, March 20, 2019 photo, maritime traffic moves through the Houston Ship Channel past the site of now-extinguished petrochemical tank fire at Intercontinental Terminals Company in Deer Park, Texas. Air quality and water pollution from the fire's runoff, seen on the right, into the ship channel are some of the concerns in the aftermath of the blaze. (Brett Coomer/Houston Chronicle via AP)

On a normal day, 42 tankers, 19 freighters, 391 barges, 128 ferries and 2 cruise ships will move through the Houston Ship Channel. On any given day, one of those tankers may be as long as 1,500 feet.

The last week, though, has been anything but normal.

The second busiest U.S. port by tonnage was closed for three days by a cloud of cancer-causing benzene and toxic runoff that's settled on the water from nearby chemical fires. It's not the first time the channel has closed. Fog and hurricanes have shut it in the past. But the channel's significance has grown almost daily

## Recommended Video

as drillers in the shale fields of Texas have made the region one of the world's fastest growing exporters of oil, gasoline and diesel.

In the past few days, about 60 ocean-going most important business artery, supporting not only the number of ships that makes the size.

cost \$1 billion

In the past year, because of the 45-foot depth at its center line, the channel has seen its first visits by new Panamax ships, named to reflect the fact that their 1,200-foot lengths can only be accommodated by the new larger lock on the Panama Canal, and by so-called Very Large Crude Carriers, or VLCCs, tankers able to carry 2 million barrels of crude.

"The channel isn't getting any larger, but the ships are," said Chris Hebert, a meteorologist who tracks the Gulf's hurricane and fog seasons for StormGeo, a weather service used by the Houston Pilots Association.

The channel was partially opened on March 25 while the clean-up continues. Pilots have been ordered by the U.S. Coast Guard to stay at least 30 minutes apart so each vessel can be inspected to ensure it's not dragging oily residue through the water.

Life and work across Houston's eastern suburbs have been disrupted since Intercontinental Terminals Co.'s chemical storage facility erupted in flames 10 days ago. After the fires were out, nearby residents and companies were menaced by benzene leaks and a wall collapse that allowed toxic fluids to stream into the ship channel.

**BOTTLENECK:** Deer Park fire crimps commerce in ship channel

'Texas Chicken'

Even in good times, navigating the waterway can be challenging. Pilots passing one another perform a maneuver called the "Texas chicken" which requires setting a near head-on course, then swinging their bows away from each other before using the cushion provided by the other ship's wake to swing their sterns out and come back to the center of the channel—all while avoiding any barges in the outside lanes.

The maneuver requires a deft touch, as the giant ships displace huge quantities of water that can seriously affect handling.

These factors were partially to blame for one of the last major shipping incidents on the channel when, in 2015, an inbound bulk carrier, the 623-foot Conti Peridot, lost control and collided with the 600-foot Carla Maersk, an outbound tanker. No one was injured, but 2,100 barrels of methyl tertiary-butyl ether spilled into the water, closing the channel for three days.

The waterway was expanded in a decade-long project completed in 2005. Ships now transit the channel through a 530-foot wide center lane, flanked on both sides by 235-foot wide lanes for barges and tow vessels. The ship lane was dredged five feet deeper to 45 feet.

**BIG JOB: ITC cleanup targets pockets of oil on bayous, Ship Channel**

### Safety Margins

"Anyone who thought we were getting increased safety margins out of that didn't quite understand the nature of maritime traffic," said Steven Nerheim, the retired Navy captain now directing the Coast Guard's Vessel Traffic Service for Houston-Galveston. "What it got us was bigger ships."

Restoring order after a closure is a complex logistical feat for the port's stakeholders, according to Nerheim. "We prioritize and open the valve slowly so that it doesn't look like the Oklahoma land rush," he said in a telephone interview.

"We're always working to find a combination of mitigation strategies to continue moving an ever larger number of ever larger ships in a ship channel that's not growing," Nerheim said. "Even if we started digging tomorrow to widen it, it would take years to get it done. So my hope is that we start digging tomorrow because the traffic is here."

# EPA may thwart efforts by states to set stricter pesticide rules

By LIZ CRAMPTON 03/26/2019 02:52 PM EDT

State regulators are worried that the Environmental Protection Agency is getting ready to override them on a host of pesticide regulations by negating stricter rules intended to curb crop damage or prevent environmental hazards from pesticides.

The EPA quietly announced last week that it was considering a new way to handle requests by states that want to impose stricter rules or extra training than the federal government mandates on pesticides. The EPA said it won't make any changes this growing season and will have a public comment period before changes are made, but the agency said it was evaluating "the circumstances under which it will exercise its authority to disapprove those requests."

States can seek additional restrictions from the EPA for various reasons, such as accounting for local pests or environmental concerns. But the EPA noted that some requests it gets are to "narrow the federal label."

That can be when a state sets a more restrictive cut-off date for when pesticides can be applied. Or, a state can set additional training and certification for pesticide applicators outside the range of EPA's requirements.

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Rose Kachadoorian, president of the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials, told POLITICO she doesn't see what problem the agency is trying to address, adding that she believes the existing system is working well.

"A lot of these states want to ensure the continued availability of a technology," she said, stressing that making adjustments would limit states' rights. "By having the ability to have increased training, cut-off dates and other restrictions, it's actually enabling states to use that technology and they want to be able to use it."

"We look forward to a robust public dialogue on this matter," an EPA spokesperson said in a statement.

The biggest change could affect how state regulators have stepped in to restrict dicamba, a herbicide developed by Monsanto and BASF to combat pigweed and other undesired plants that have become resistant to Monsanto's flagship weedkiller Roundup.

Dicamba is commonly applied to soybeans in the Midwest and South. For instance, Illinois announced this month five restrictions beyond the federal guidelines for the 2019 growing season, such as a June 30 cutoff date for spraying dicamba, and prohibition of spraying dicamba when the wind is blowing toward nearby residential areas.

The EPA says it receives about 300 requests a year from states looking to adjust federal regulations under so-called section 24(c) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, or FIFRA. The agency says it has the authority to set guidelines for how and when farmers can apply pesticides to their fields, under what's referred to as the federal label.

But last week's notice seems to suggest that the EPA has a problem with states' efforts to impose more regulations "to narrow the federal label, such as to add a more restrictive cut-off date, to add training and certification requirements, or to restrict the use directions by limiting the number of treatments permitted by the federal label."



WOMEN RULE

**Seema Verma: Medicaid reform rejected by Trump is 'under review'**

By ZACK STANTON

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The EPA notification said it "will make every effort to work with the states on the 24(c) program, but if there is the need, the [EPA] Administrator may suspend a state's registration authority due to lack of, or failure to exercise adequate control by the state."

The EPA provision is not the only pesticide regulation tool states have. The Arkansas State Plant Board, which oversees one of the nation's largest soybean-producing states, faced intense pressure from agricultural companies after it took steps to restrict dicamba use amid reports of millions of

acres of damage caused to crops not resistant to the herbicide. Monsanto, the maker of dicamba, promptly sued the state board before losing in court.

But those restrictions were developed under the state's rule-making authority, so they wouldn't be affected by any changes the EPA may make in section 24(c) rules, an Arkansas Department of Agriculture spokesperson confirmed. Other states, like Tennessee, however, did file a request with the EPA to impose stricter rules on dicamba use.

If the EPA decides to step in to overrule states on certain restrictions, Bayer, which recently purchased Monsanto and its product lines, could be one of the main beneficiaries of that change.

The company, which has been tangled in lawsuits and other battles over dicamba drift, argues that crop damage is related to farmers misapplying the product, and that its herbicide is safe to use. Bayer has said that additional state restrictions are unnecessary.

In October, the EPA conditionally approved the re-registration of XtendiMax, Bayer's dicamba product. It continues to be used by farmers as long as they abide by certain limitations.

EPA's approval of dicamba "reaffirms that this tool is vital for growers and can continue to be used safely according to federal label directions," a Bayer spokesman said in a statement provided to POLITICO. "There is simply no scientific basis for state-level restrictions on this technology."

Kachadoorian, who also serves as pesticide program manager at the Oregon Department of Agriculture, says states plan to share their concerns with EPA ahead of any potential rule changes.

"This has concerned a lot of states that EPA is now taking a focus on that because we rely on this as a mechanism to help ensure crop safety, environmental safety," she said.

## NWA EDITORIAL: Protect the Buffalo

While you're at it, do it for entire state

by NWA Democrat-Gazette | Today at 1:00 a.m.

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Virtually every perspective on the biggest issues known to humans has been boiled down to a few words and printed on bumper stickers.

What will we do when self-driving cars leave most of us without our own bumpers on which to broadcast our pithy thoughts to the rest of the traveling public?

What's the point?

The impact of a bill to shift permitting authority for farm operations in Arkansas is too murky. The bill should be rejected by lawmakers for the good of the state's waters and residents.

For the moment, though, the world has plenty of bumpers/mini-billboards, and across the country is a mobile fleet of vehicles united only in their auto-borne messages of appreciation for the American farmer.

"Eat today?" one of them asks. "Thank a farmer."

"Farmers are outstanding in their field," another says.

"No farm. No food," says one prediction of dire consequences from a future none of us would want to witness.

Arkansans from every walk of life can appreciate earnest recognition of the value of farmers.

Agriculture in all its forms -- from row crops to animal husbandry -- represents a multi-billion dollar part of the state's economy every year. When farming is affected, the entire state of Arkansas is affected.

Then again, another bumper sticker offers wisdom also worth heeding: "Whatever happens to the water happens to the people."

Just as every Arkansan is touched in some way by the state's strong connection to agriculture, the state's residents are also impacted by the quality of water in the form of lakes, creeks, streams and



rivers. We drink from them. We swim in them. We invite people from elsewhere to come experience them. We rely on water to support varied ecological systems across a diverse state.

Our lives and our livelihoods are deeply connected to farming and to the state's precious bodies of water.

This is why the debate over Senate Bill 550 in the Arkansas General Assembly is so important. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Mary Bentley, R-Perryville, would dramatically change the state's approach to evaluating and permitting concentrated animal feeding operations, such as hog farms,

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW

## More related headlines

Bill to change how Arkansas farms get permits draws EPA review

Arkansas governor calls for postponing hog-farm bill

Bill would transfer Arkansas hog farms' oversight

BRENDA BLAGG: Constant vigilance

Governor says lawmakers should pull bill that would change how Arkansas farms get permits

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Bentley's bill -- more specifically, a bill advanced by the powerful Arkansas Farm Bureau -- if passed will move the permitting process from the state's Department of Environmental Quality and hand it entirely to the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission. The Senate has approved the bill, which is now in the House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development and scheduled for consideration today at last word.

That committee is chaired by Rep. Dan Douglas of Bentonville. Its membership also includes Northwest Arkansas lawmaker Harlan Breaux of Holiday Island, in case any residents want to voice a perspective on this legislation.

Our opinion is, in basic form, the same as Gov. Asa Hutchinson's. On Monday, Hutchinson said he hopes state lawmakers do not proceed with the bill, largely because it has drawn the attention of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

It's important to note that the EPA, a federal agency, authorizes state environmental regulators to administer a lot of the federal regulations designed to protect water, air and soil. The state agency is, to a great degree, the eyes and ears of the federal agency and is responsible for applying and enforcing federal rules.

Senate Bill 550 has apparently made the EPA a little concerned. It notified the state that it's reviewing the bill to see if it complies with the Clean Water Act. If the federal agency determine the bill does not, it could reclaim its authority to enforce its own regulations in Arkansas.

Hutchinson called on lawmakers to "postpone" their efforts on the bill also because of his work to realign state agencies for efficiency.

"Right in the middle of a transformation is not the time to be making dramatic rule changes for large-scale animal feeding operations," he said.

We couldn't agree more. But the powerful farming forces push on, eager to move enforcement authority to the Natural Resources Commission. Supporters are advancing a narrative that convenience -- allowing farmers to deal only with one agency -- is their driving force. They claim they're not really changing the rules. But anyone who doubts this plan is designed to make it easier to permit farms/agri operations that pollute should reconsider such notions.

This bill will affect the entire state, but is largely rooted in the years-long controversy over a hog farm operation near the Buffalo National River. It's a farm operation that, in our view, should never have been allowed so close to such a vital tourism resource. Farming advocates, it seems, want to ensure the concerns over the Buffalo River don't promote a more constrictive regulatory environment for farmers elsewhere in the state.

It's clear, so to speak, that the impacts of SB550 are murky at best, enough so that the EPA is made nervous by its provisions.

Here's what we'd put on our bumper sticker today: "Hutchinson is right. Do not pass SB550."

## BRENDA BLAGG: Constant vigilance

### Bill to change farm regulation earns opposition

by Brenda Blagg | Today at 1:00 a.m.



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Follow

State lawmakers are getting an earful these days on legislation that would change how hog farms are permitted in this state.

They should be.

Credit the long-running travails of a controversial hog farm near the treasured Buffalo National River for much of the sensitivity to the issue.

Litigation over the huge concentrated animal feeding operation there continues to this day.

The long-fought battle galvanized environmentalists and others caught up in protecting the Buffalo and other water resources.

In fact, a lot of lessons were hard learned by the public and by the regulators and by a governor or two.

So groups like the Buffalo River Watershed Alliance were at the ready this year when this new legislation, promoted by the Arkansas Farm Bureau, fell in the legislative hopper. They've weighed in on this new battle, pummeling lawmakers and others with communication. So have other environmental groups, utilities and more.

At issue is Senate Bill 550 by Sen. Gary Stubblefield, R-Branch, which would change the state agency responsible for permitting farms that have liquid animal manure systems -- such as that controversial hog farm near the Buffalo River.

Instead of the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, SB 550 would shift that responsibility to the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission.

The bill easily passed the Senate recently, but has encountered more resistance in the House, where a House committee was scheduled to consider the bill on Wednesday.

Exactly what the bill would and would not do is part of the continuing debate. So is the bill's impact on requirements for notification and issues regarding public disclosure of related records.

As late as Monday, sponsors were trying to amend the bill to ease concerns, but opposition continues to build.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson on Monday called for sponsors to pull the bill. The governor cited the recent engagement of a federal agency in the debate.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Friday alerted the state Department of Environmental Quality that this proposed state legislation is under review.

The concern is that there could be implications for the federal Clean Water Act, which the state is currently delegated to enforce.

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW

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Hutchinson said Monday he doesn't want the EPA taking over any programs that the state currently runs.

He also cited ongoing efforts to realign state agencies and said, "Right in the middle of a transformation is not the time to be making dramatic rule changes for large-scale animal feeding operations."

Not for nothing, the governor also noted he had received more than 200 communications opposing the bill.

Besides the conservation groups, opposition has come from utilities, such as the Beaver Water District and Central Arkansas Water, and former state environmental regulators.

Meanwhile, Rep. Mary Bentley, R-Perryville, the House sponsor of the legislation, offered up another amendment to make provisions of SB 550 "null and void," should the federal regulators disapprove of it.

That fix won't satisfy clean water concerns or stop opposition to the legislation.

All of this suggests the bill may be killed, but keep in mind that the people who want it passed have some of the most effective lobbyists working to move the bill through the Legislature.

A week after the bill was filed, it had not only cleared a Senate committee but was passed by the full Senate on a 25-5 vote.

Little more than a week later, the bill is slated as a special order of business in the House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development.

Maybe it will get out of committee this week. Maybe not.

Anyone concerned about this particular legislation should be wary, however. This is precisely the kind of legislation that could linger on a calendar and get passed in the last frantic days of the session.

This fight won't be over until the Legislature adjourns.

# Carlsbad Department of Development is thankful for WIPP

Adrian C Hedden, Carlsbad Current-Argus Published 8:37 a.m. MT March 26, 2019

Many who are new to Carlsbad probably do not appreciate the benefit of having a non-commodity driven industry in Eddy County. With oil, gas, and potash mining steady and strong, it may be hard to understand the benefits that the nuclear material management industry has had on our region.

From the mid 1970s until the first waste shipment was received on March 26, 1999, the Carlsbad Department of Development and its members realized what benefits the WIPP site might have on the economy of Carlsbad and worked tirelessly to help get the project approved, constructed and built.

There was a time not too long ago in southern Eddy County when our economy was turbulent and closely followed the rise and fall of potash and oil prices. Although a mainstay in northern Eddy County, oil and gas jobs were not as prevalent in those days down around Carlsbad and Loving and the majority of those resources had yet to be discovered.

**More:** [What did WIPP accomplish during a month-long pause?](#)

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Executive Director of the Carlsbad Department of Development Jon Waters meets with state lawmaker during the annual WIPP Legislative Breakfast, Jan. 28, 2019 at the Hotel Santa Fe. (Photo: Adrian Hedden | Current-Argus)

It might be interesting for people to know that the majority of the effort to get WIPP recruited, built and opened occurred during relatively good times for both the potash industry and the oil industry. Some insist that our leaders were desperate to get any industry in Carlsbad because of a great economic trauma.

That is not true. To quote Chuck Bernhard, a predecessor of mine, from a 1989 letter to the EPA: "Our past and current involvement with WIPP has never been, nor is, nor will ever be an act of economic desperation." As proof, he pointed to 300 people that were hired by the potash mines in 1989 as the community was fighting to get the facility open and the higher oil prices and strong industry in the 1970s when Carlsbad's leaders started to look at recruiting WIPP.

Apart from the pride in being a part of a solution to a national problem, our leaders recognized the true economic value of WIPP — not as an industry meant to replace our extractive industries, but to complement them.

**More:** [Oil and gas brings \\$2.2 billion to NM while lawmakers debate regulation](#)

Since the construction phase for WIPP way back in the 1980s, our nuclear industry has helped buffer the economic slowdowns during the occasional low oil and potash markets. It had and continues to have a tremendous stabilizing effect on our community and will so for decades to come.

On the 20th anniversary of WIPP's opening, as a person that grew up in Carlsbad and was fortunate enough to come back, I am thankful. I am thankful for the hard work that our community's business and elected leaders put in to get WIPP approved, built, and opened since the early 1970s. I am proud of their continued work to keep it opened and funded year after year.

**More:** [WIPP: Construction projects coming as operations resume](#)

I am thankful for the professional companies that have operated the facility and the laboratories that work with WIPP. Their knowledge and participation in our community has enriched us in ways too numerous to count. I am most proud of the people of southeastern New Mexico, natives and newcomers, which work in this world class facility to help solve the nation's nuclear waste disposal challenges.

Here's to another 20 years of WIPP!

# Wheeler vows not to work on Pebble, some Superfund sites

Dylan Brown and Corbin Hiar, E&E News reporters Published: Tuesday, March 26, 2019



The Pebble Mine prospect site is seen here in 2008. Erin McKittrick/GroundTruthTrekkng.org

EPA chief Andrew Wheeler has promised not to weigh in on the Pebble mine proposal and toxic waste site cleanups connected to his former lobbying clients after media scrutiny.

The Pebble move, Wheeler announced in an [updated recusal statement](#), will apply to "any associated litigation, settlement agreement and permitting" and last "for the duration of my EPA tenure."

The Superfund recusal promise, on the other hand, will last only until April 20, 2020 — the second anniversary of Wheeler's tenure in the Trump administration — and hasn't broadened the scope of sites Wheeler will avoid, according to a spreadsheet provided by EPA.

The updated document eliminated eight days from the period of time Wheeler is "prohibited from participating in any particular matter involving specific parties" he represented or issues he lobbied on in the two years before he joined EPA as well as clients that are now represented by his former employer, Faegre Baker Daniels LLP, and clarified that he could work on "particular matters of general applicability" such as the Clean Power Plan.

The reason for the date change, the new document says, was a "typographical error" regarding when Wheeler was "sworn into federal service."

Wheeler's updated recusal list continues to include Murray Energy Corp., International Paper, Sargento Foods Inc. and five other former clients as well as two lobbying issues: the Energy Star efficiency certification program and Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act, which covers a potential emergency declaration to prevent coal-fired power plant closures.

The new document — signed March 20 and first reported yesterday by Bloomberg News — was careful to note that the Pebble addition was "not necessarily required" and was intended "to avoid the appearance of any ethical concerns in the role of Administrator."

Wheeler's original May 2018 [recusal statement](#) did not mention Pebble LP or its controversial Alaska gold and copper project, even though his former lobbying firm set up a pivotal meeting for the mining company at EPA two years ago.

Faegre never registered to lobby for Pebble LP, and both parties have declined to comment on the nature of their relationship. But lobbyist Darrin Munoz, who worked directly with Wheeler for separate clients at the time, arranged and attended the 2017 meeting between Pebble CEO Tom Collier and then-EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt ([Greenwire](#), July 24, 2018). Munoz now works full-time for his and Wheeler's former client Murray Energy ([Greenwire](#), March 4).

Pebble wanted Pruitt to scrap mining restrictions proposed by the Obama administration that, if finalized, would block construction to protect world-class salmon breeding grounds downstream in Bristol Bay.

An hour later, Pruitt ordered the cancellation of the pending Bristol Bay [proposed determination](#). He would later withdraw that order, but Pebble had already submitted a mining application and secured a legal [settlement](#) preventing EPA from finalizing mining restrictions until 2021.

When Pruitt resigned, Pebble foes and ethics watchdogs quickly called for Wheeler to recuse himself, but EPA said agency ethics officials concluded that was unnecessary because Wheeler never worked directly for Pebble LP.



EPA General Counsel Matthew Leopold now has final say on Pebble matters.

"We will work with the appropriate people within the agency and keep our focus on removing the ill-conceived Proposed Determination," Pebble spokesman Mike Heatwole said.

Wheeler's step away from the high-stakes Pebble debate comes six months after E&E News first reported he was considering the move ([Greenwire](#), Sept. 19, 2018).

## Superfund



EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler has recused himself from work on Superfund sites involving his former clients. markzra/Wikipedia

Meanwhile, Wheeler's explicit promise to avoid involvement in Superfund sites where his "former clients" are potentially responsible parties is also "to avoid any concerns about my ethical obligations," the updated recusal says.

But the administrator is still recused from overseeing only 45 sites where International Paper is responsible for the cleanup, an EPA [spreadsheet](#) shows.

That means he could continue to guide the cleanup of the Navajo Nation uranium mines, which Energy Fuels Resources Inc. — a uranium mining firm on Wheeler's recusal list — has said it's looking "to become involved in" ([E&E News PM](#), Feb. 1).

The new language also wouldn't apply to the \$1.4 billion Diamond Alkali Superfund cleanup and other sites that involve past clients Wheeler lobbied for more than two years before joining the Trump administration because EPA doesn't consider them "former clients," as defined by the president's ethics pledge ([Greenwire](#), Sept. 10, 2018).

Most of EPA's Superfund decisionmaking is currently overseen by Peter Wright, a special counsel to the administrator whom President Trump has nominated to lead the agency's Office of Land and Emergency Management on a long-term basis. Wright, a former lawyer for DowDuPont Inc., is also recused from weighing in on dozens of sites linked to his previous employer ([Greenwire](#), Aug. 6, 2018).

# Report: Methane emissions are higher on Navajo lands

Hannah Grover, Farmington Daily Times Published 5:00 p.m. MT March 26, 2019  
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FARMINGTON — An eight-page report released by the Environmental Defense Fund states oil and natural gas companies waste more than a billion cubic feet of natural gas extracted from Navajo Nation lands each year, leading to a loss of \$3.4 million of profits and \$850,000 of royalties.

“It’s still not something that every member of the community is aware of,” said Carol Davis, coordinator and director for Diné CARE.

Diné CARE was one of several environmental advocacy groups that signed onto the report. Other groups include Grand Canyon Trust and Native American Voters Alliance. Davis said she hopes the report helps build awareness, especially among tribal leaders.

But New Mexico Oil and Gas Association spokesman Robert McEntyre said the environmental advocacy group is presenting misleading information in an attempt to get laws passed.

“The way that EDF chooses to mischaracterize these issues are blatantly misleading and false,” he said.

The report states this waste of natural gas through venting and flaring causes 13,000 tons of methane to be emitted annually, 65 percent higher than the national average. Jon Goldstein, director of regulatory and legislative affairs for Environmental Defense Fund, said the Navajo Nation has more methane emissions than the San Juan Basin at large.

Jon Goldstein, senior policy manager for U.S. climate and energy for the Environmental Defense Fund, called the size and scale of methane emissions on Navajo Nation lands "eye opening." (Photo: John R. Moses/The Daily Times)

These numbers were based on analyzing data the Environmental Defense Fund collected from wells in New Mexico as well as the Western Regional Air Partnership data.

“I think the size and scale of the problem is definitely eye opening,” Goldstein said.

Goldstein admits that the organization hopes the report brings about change in Navajo Nation, including increased regulation by Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency. Navajo Nation EPA did not respond to requests for comment.

Amber Raimondo, energy program director for Grand Canyon Trust, also expressed hope that the report leads to change.

“With information can come action,” she said.

She said emissions could be reduced by regular inspection of well sites to repair leaks and restrictions on venting and flaring.

McEntyre said venting and flaring are necessary activities and not a waste of gas. He said venting is typically done when pressure builds up at the wellhead and must be relieved for safety reasons. Meanwhile, flaring is most common on new construction. McEntyre said flaring also relieves pressure.

He said venting and flaring are not only necessary for oil and gas, but are also allowed by federal and state regulations.

# Researcher warns climate change could spur financial crisis

By Steve Matthews/Bloomberg

Tuesday, March 26th, 2019 at 3:17pm

Climate change is becoming increasingly relevant to central bankers because losses from natural disasters that are magnified by higher temperatures and elevated sea levels could spark a financial crisis, a Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco researcher found.

“Climate-related financial risks could affect the economy through elevated credit spreads, greater precautionary saving, and, in the extreme, a financial crisis,” Glenn Rudebusch, the San Francisco Fed’s executive vice president for research, wrote in a paper published this week.

“There could also be direct effects in the form of larger and more frequent macroeconomic shocks associated with the infrastructure damage, agricultural losses and commodity price spikes caused by the droughts, floods, and hurricanes amplified by climate change,” according to Rudebusch, who is also a senior policy adviser at the reserve bank.

While the Fed’s primary policy tools — short-term interest rates and large-scale asset purchases — aren’t designed to address a phenomenon like global warming, policy makers may need to take climate-related damages into account when considering the long-term economic outlook, the researcher wrote.

“Many central banks already include climate change in their assessments of future economic and financial risks when setting monetary and financial supervisory policy,” he wrote.

Fed Chairman Jerome Powell told legislators in February it was a “fair question” to ask how the central bank would evaluate the economic impact of climate change and promised to look into it.

Rudebusch, whose bank operates as part of the Fed system but isn’t directed by Powell, suggested lawmakers could promote a transition to cleaner technologies by imposing a carbon tax, which is a fee on emissions. Former Fed chairmen Alan Greenspan and Paul Volcker in January endorsed a plan to tax emissions and distribute the revenue to U.S. households.

Some pressure is mounting in Congress to take aim at climate change, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi pledging to take up climate legislation. That effort may not go far in the current political environment, as Republicans control the Senate and the White House. President Donald Trump said during the campaign he opposed taxing emissions and has expressed skepticism that humans contribute to global warming.

# West Bank cyanide plant proposal again goes before skeptical public

Updated Mar 26, 1:19 PM;  
Posted Mar 26, 1:14 PM



The Fortier manufacturing complex, which includes a Cornerstone Chemical Co. plant, at 10800 River Road in Waggaman, was photographed Feb. 8, 2019.

By Drew Broach, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

As Cornerstone Chemical Co. tries to sway public opinion for a new cyanide plant, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality said Tuesday (March 26) it has received 932 comments on whether to issue an air quality permit for the Waggaman project. "That is a substantial number," agency spokesman Greg Langley said.

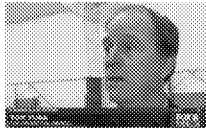
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Another public meeting on the contentious proposal is scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Waggaman Playground gymnasium, 516 Dandelion St. It was arranged by Jefferson Parish Councilman Mark Spears Jr., who is considering whether to revoke the local government's approval for the project.

At the state level, the Department of Environmental Quality extended its comment period for 30 days, through March 20, after a groundswell of interest in the project.

Langley said a few comments, postmarked before the deadline, were still arriving, and that each must be answered. He said he did not know when the agency will decide whether to issue an air quality permit.



West Bank cyanide plant wins reprieve from Jefferson Parish and a chance to win over the public

At the local level, the Parish Council approved the project in a routine vote 14 months ago. After residents belatedly learned of it, they mounted an election-year lobbying effort, prompting Spears and the council to reconsider.

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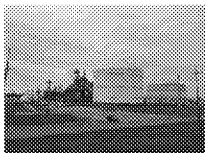
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Cornerstone and its predecessors have been generating hydrogen cyanide, or HCN, at the 800-acre Fortier manufacturing complex, directly across the Mississippi River from Louis Armstrong International Airport, since 1953. It's a

byproduct of making acrylonitrile, which is used to manufacture synthetic fibers and plastics.

The company delivers hydrogen cyanide to another Fortier tenant, Evonik Industries, which uses it to make acrylic monomers for plastics, paints and coatings and for the oil and gas industry.

Cornerstone says it is spending \$20 million modernizing its existing plant, which will reduce hydrogen cyanide output and, according to Jefferson Parish's chief hazardous materials officer, make it safer. But because the company is under contract to deliver to a tenant, it proposes building a \$100 million new cyanide plant there.



Cyanide plant for West Bank alarms residents of east bank

The company's chief operating officer, Tom Yura, seemed to surprise Parish Councilmembers when he said March 20 there will be a "net zero increase of production of HCN on site." Further, he stressed that two 26,000-gallon storage tanks included in the expansion proposal won't be filled with cyanide for long periods of time but will be used sporadically at less than capacity.



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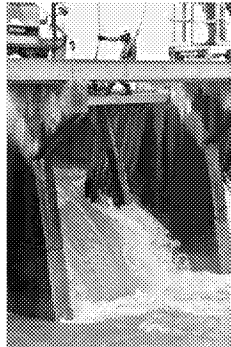
His statements contributed to the council postponing its vote to revoke the local permit and setting up Wednesday's meeting for the company to present its case to the public. Yura plans to attend the meeting, a company spokeswoman said.

A leading skeptic, however, Lisa Karlin of River Ridge, said many residents remain opposed to Cornerstone's proposal.

"No amount of cyanide storage is OK with us," Karlin said.

# With Mississippi River beginning to recede, Bonnet Carre Spillway closure begins

ADVOCATE STAFF REPORT MAR 26, 2019 - 9:38 AM



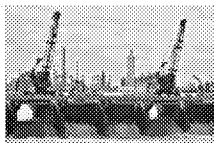
The Army Corps of Engineers pull pins to open bays of the Bonnet Carre Spillway to deal with a rapidly rising Mississippi River in Norco, La. Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019. The spillway reroutes water from the Mississippi into Lake Pontchartrain, where it then flows into Mississippi Sound and the Gulf of Mexico. The Army Corps of Engineers opened 28 bays of the spillway.

Advocate staff photo by MAX BECHERER

Advocate Staff

With a reduction in the Mississippi River, the Bonnet Carre Spillway will begin to close on Tuesday, the Army Corps of Engineers announced.

The closure of bays begins 26 days after the opening, and the river still remains at elevated levels.



## **Bonnet Carre Spillway opens along Mississippi River for third time in four years**

The Corps expects to close between 15 and 20 bays a day, depending on conditions, spokesman Matt Roe said. At that rate, it would take about ten days to close the 196 bays that are now open, he said.

The opening of the spillway on the morning of Feb. 27 marked the first time in its history it had been opened in back-to-back years. It's been used three out of the past four years, but used just 13 times in its 90-year history.

The spillway is opened whenever the flow in the Mississippi reaches a rate of 1.25 million cubic feet per second, a level that roughly corresponds with a river height of 17 feet above sea level and leaves it a few feet shy of the top of the levees.

Before the spillway was opened, the river had reached a height of just above 16 feet at the Carrollton gauge in New Orleans, but pressure from water upstream pushed it past the rate that triggers the opening, David Ramirez, the Corps' chief of water management, said when the first bays were opened.

The river now sits at about 16.5 feet and is expected to fall steady over the next month, Roe said.

There has been significant rain to the north in recent weeks and flooding in the Midwest but Corps officials do not currently expect the river to rise enough to require the spillway to be reopened, he said.

The river levels should fall to just above 13 feet by the end of the 28-day forecast the Corps uses, he said.

Check back for updates.

## DOD chief addresses PFAS criticism, skirts climate question

Courtney Columbus, E&E News reporter  
Published: Wednesday, March 27, 2019



Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan during a hearing yesterday. House Armed Services Committee/YouTube

Lawmakers on the House Armed Services Committee yesterday grilled acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan on the impacts of climate change on the military.

They also pressed him on contamination caused by toxic nonstick chemicals found in military firefighting foam.

Rep. Jim Langevin (D-R.I.), who leads the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Emerging Threats and Capabilities, said the Department of Defense had responded to his criticism of a congressionally mandated climate report.

Langevin called the response, a letter dated March 22, a "half-baked rejoinder."

The report assessed the vulnerability of 79 installations to climate effects including drought and recurrent flooding now and 20 years in the future (Greenwire, Jan. 18).

Langevin said the Pentagon did not address some of his concerns in the response, including its lack of discussion of overseas bases, Camp Lejeune and other large installations, and for not assessing how much funding Congress should appropriate.

During the hearing, Langevin asked Shanahan if he agreed "that climate change poses a threat to our readiness, to our ability to achieve military objectives."

The acting secretary offered a one-sentence response that did not include the words "climate" or "climate change."

"I believe we need to address resilience in our operations and our design and how we build out our facilities," he said.

Numerous other Defense officials have publicly commented on the links between climate change and national security, according to a running list kept by the Center for Climate and Security.

### PFAS

Rep. Jack Bergman (R-Mich.) asked Shanahan about PFAS contamination at current and former military bases.

Some of the roughly 5,000 chemicals in the PFAS family have been linked to health problems such as liver disease and certain cancers. Military firefighting foam and a wide variety of other industrial and consumer products contain PFAS. The chemicals are not federally regulated.

The issue needs to be addressed "writ large, in all of our communities. This is a significant health and environmental risk," Shanahan said, later adding that DOD's focus has been on eliminating the use of fire retardants that contain those chemicals.

"We truly need to get a harmonization of the environmental mitigation plans," he said in response to a follow-up question from Bergman about what Congress could do to support DOD in working with other agencies to address PFAS contamination.

Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.) also pressed Shanahan on PFAS. "I sincerely hope that the Department [of Defense] hears the concerns of my colleagues and stops hiding behind bureaucratic and regulatory red tape to avoid helping communities clean up PFAS contaminants," she said.

In response to further questions from Slotkin, Shanahan pushed back against a *New York Times* article published earlier this month. The *Times* reported that the Pentagon wanted weaker PFAS standards.

"The article is not accurate, and the Department of Defense is not asking for the standard to be lowered," Shanahan said.